

# Department of Land and Natural Resources

## Sustainability Hotspot

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### KAENA POINT NATURAL AREA RESERVE

~Island of Oahu~



Top to bottom: Kaena Point NAR; the salmon colored ohai flower (*Sesbania tomentosa*); a Laysan albatross, or moli, chick (*Diomedea immutabilis*).

The scenic, rugged semi-wilderness coastal area that is Kaena Point is located from Dillingham Airport to Keawaula (Yokohama) Beach on the island of Oahu. The unique character of the area attracts and fulfills the needs of residents and visitors seeking a wilderness experience within a short drive of Oahu's urban centers. Outstanding features of this Natural Area Reserve (NAR) and the surrounding area include:

- tide pools, coastal sand dunes, lowland grassland/shrubland;
- habitat for rare plant species and associated insects, wildlife habitat for native animals including the endangered *Pueo* (Hawaiian short-eared owl) and monk seal;
- a nesting site for seabirds such as Laysan albatross and wedgetail shearwater;
- an abundance of historic and cultural sites;
- an off-shore habitat for reef fish and other marine animals that is a magnet for fishermen, marine predators like spinner dolphins, and migrating humpback whales.

After 7 years of improved resource management and a ban on motorized vehicles, the natural area reserve portion at Kaena Point is in good condition. The ground cover is quickly returning. Colonies of albatross and shearwaters regularly nest in the reserve. Monk seals are regularly seen on the beaches. Rare plants indigenous to the area are showing signs of recovery. The leeward side is recovering at a slower pace due to the dryer climate and established alien grasses. The remarkable recovery of the reserve can, in part, be attributed to the presence of DLNR's Kaena Point Ambassador.

#### DLNR's Sustainability Hotspot Team for Kaena Point:

**Randy Kennedy - Forestry and Wildlife, Oahu, 973-9783;**  
Michael Ebina - Conservation and Resources Enforcement;  
Betsy Gagne - Forestry and Wildlife;  
William Gorst - State Parks;  
Brian Kanenaka - Aquatic Resources;  
Rueben Mateo - Kaena Point Ambassador, Forestry and Wildlife;  
Nathan Napoka - Historic Preservation;  
Sherrie Samuels - State Parks;  
Cecil Santos - Land Division;

is responsible for the management of the resources in this area.

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Top to bottom: Pau o Hiiaka “the skirt of Hiiaka” (*Jacquemontia ovalifolia*), midden eroding from cultural deposit, the rough and muddy road to Kaena Point NAR.

#### DLNR’s Vision for the Future and How to Attain It

In DLNR’s vision for the future of Kaena Point, the department will be able to restore coastal ecosystems and protect threatened and endangered species. Historic sites will be protected and interpreted to foster appreciation for Hawaii’s host culture. Access to the wilderness area will be open for compatible activities including natural and cultural education, fishing, hiking, diving, surfing and bicycling on designated pathways. For public safety purposes, vehicular and non-vehicular uses will be separated wherever feasible. To achieve DLNR’s vision:

- funding for the Kaena Point ambassador position must continue;
- repairs to roads must be made;
- DLNR must collect data and conduct surveys to aid in planning process. This research will cover public use, engineering design study of the existing roads, flora and fauna, threatened and endangered species, historic and cultural sites, marine resources, and the hydrology of the area;
- a plan to address fire prevention must be devised and implemented;
- eroded areas must be planted, predominantly with native plants;
- improvements in infrastructure for maintenance of the reserve must be made, including development of a bike pathway with interpretive signage and construction of a comfort station.

To accomplish some of its goals, DLNR will continue to work hand-in-hand with community groups to design a joint vision for the area. It is imperative to develop a local and effective stewardship force for present and future support of the Kaena area. Presently DLNR is engaged in community-based management of the reserve with: Kaena Point Citizens Advisory Committee, Friends of Kaena Point, Kokua Kaena Point service trips, and Camp Erdman YMCA.

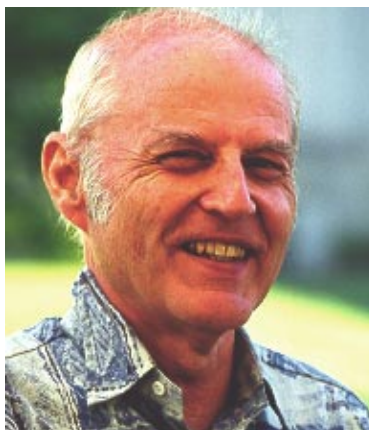
**Total start-up costs to implement DLNR’s vision for the future of Kaena Point NAR is just over \$1.8 million. Annual operating costs total \$207,000. 🌿**

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Top: Signs posted at Kaena Point NAR during breeding season. Measures taken by DLNR to reduce predation have helped to increase the returning seabird population in the reserve. Middle: Monk seal basking in the sun. Bottom: Hotspot Team member William Gorst of State Parks.



DLNR's Hotspot Team for Kaena Point NAR and the surrounding area: (standing, l-r) Mateo, Santos, Napoka, Gagne, Kennedy, (seated, l-r) Samuels, Ebina, Kanenaka.